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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Hinuma, et al.
Application No. 09/038,572
Filed: March 11, 1998
Attorney Docket No. 4573-DIV

ON PETITION

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.181 filed on February 22, 2006, to withdraw the holding of abandonment.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

The application became abandoned on November 27, 1999, after no response was received to the "Notice to Comply with Requirements for Patent Applications Containing Nucleotide Sequence and/or Amino Acid Sequence Disclosures" (the "Notice") mailed October 26, 1999, which set a shortened period for reply of one month from its mailing date. No response was received within the allowable period, and the application became abandoned on November 27, 1999. A Notice of Abandonment was mailed on September 30, 2003.

In the instant petition, petitioner maintains that imposition of the holding of abandonment is improper because a Request to Transfer the sequence listing from the parent application was filed with the original application papers. Further, petitioner states that a copy of the Request to Transfer was filed on November 15, 1999.

Petitioner's argument is not persuasive. It is noted that petitioner provided a copy of the Request to Transfer that petitioner states was transmitted to the USPTO on November 15, 1999. This Request to Transfer was not found in the Image File Wrapper for the application and the copy filed with the instant petition does not contain a certificate of transmission under 37 CFR 1.8 nor was it accompanied by United States Postal Service, Express Mail postcard receipt or an USPTO date-stamp receipt. Section 711.03 of the *Manual of Patent Examining Procedure* provides guidance where, as in this case, petitioner is arguing that a timely response to the Office action was mailed and provides, in pertinent part, that:

37 CFR 1.10(c) through 1.10(e) and 1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as "Express Mail." A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in "Express Mail" must include an appropriate petition under 37 CFR 1.10(c), (d), (e), or (g) (see MPEP § 513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the "Express Mail" procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the "Express Mail" date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP § 503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of

abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 CFR 1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 CFR 1.8(b) and MPEP § 512. As stated in 37 CFR 1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 CFR 1.8).

37 CFR 1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 CFR 1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP § 512.

The above-cited section of the MPEP explains that in order for correspondence to receive a filing date as of the date of deposit with the United States Postal Service (USPS), the correspondence must either be mailed via USPS Express Mail, or the correspondence must contain a proper certificate of mailing pursuant to 37 CFR 1.8. Correspondence may also receive the date of the receipt with the USPTO if petitioner provides an itemized Office date-stamped postcard whereby the USPTO acknowledges receipt of the item mailed. There is no evidence that petitioner used the procedures provided in 37 CFR 1.8 and 1.10, which, if properly utilized, would allow a filing to be accorded a filing date as of the date mailed or deposited, respectively, rather than the date the filing was received by the Office. The certificate of mailing procedures under 37 CFR 1.8 allow for a filing date to be accorded as of the date the filing was mailed rather than the date the filing was received by the Office provided the procedures set out in 37 CFR 1.8 are followed and the filing is not excepted under 37 CFR 1.8(2)(i). The procedures under 37 CFR 1.10 allow correspondence deposited with the United States Postal Service Express Mail Service pursuant to 37 CFR 1.10 to be accorded a filing date as of the date-in shown on the Express Mail label rather than the date the filing was received by the Office. Filings made by any other mail service, i.e., first class postage, USPS certified mail, FEDEX, Priority Mail, will not receive the benefit of 37 CFR 1.10.

The holding of abandonment will not be withdrawn because petitioner has not provided *prima facie* evidence that the response was deposited with the USPS Express Mail Service within the period for reply, and has not provided a certificate of mailing pursuant to 37 CFR 1.8, or an USPTO date-stamped postcard showing that the response received and lost by the USPTO.

It is noted that applicants states that a Request to Transfer was filed with the original application papers. This filing is noted in the Image File Wrapper for the application, however, this does not relieve applicant of the responsibility of responding to the Notice of October 26, 1999. Applicant is not a liberty to ignore the requirement made in the Notice regardless of whether applicants believe that the requirement was made in error. The Notice made a requirement for a compliant sequence listing and set a one-month extendable period for reply. Applicant was obligated to file a timely response to the Notice. See MPEP 710.06. Section 711.02 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, citing 37 CFR 1.135(a) states, in pertinent part, that, "...an application becomes abandoned if applicant "fails to reply" to an office action within the fixed statutory period. This failure may result either from (A) failure to reply within the statutory period, or (B) insufficiency of reply, i.e., failure to file a "complete and proper reply, as the condition of the case may require" within the statutory period (37 CFR 1.135(b))." In this case, applicant failed to respond to the Notice, and the application was properly held abandoned on November 27, 1999.

Alternatively, petitioner may revive the application based on unintentional abandonment under 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by the required reply,

the required petition fee (\$1,620.00 for a large entity and \$810.00 for a verified small entity), and a statement that the **entire** delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By facsimile: (571) 273-8300
Attn: Office of Petitions

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision should be directed to the undersigned (571) 272-3222.

/Kenya A. McLaughlin/

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